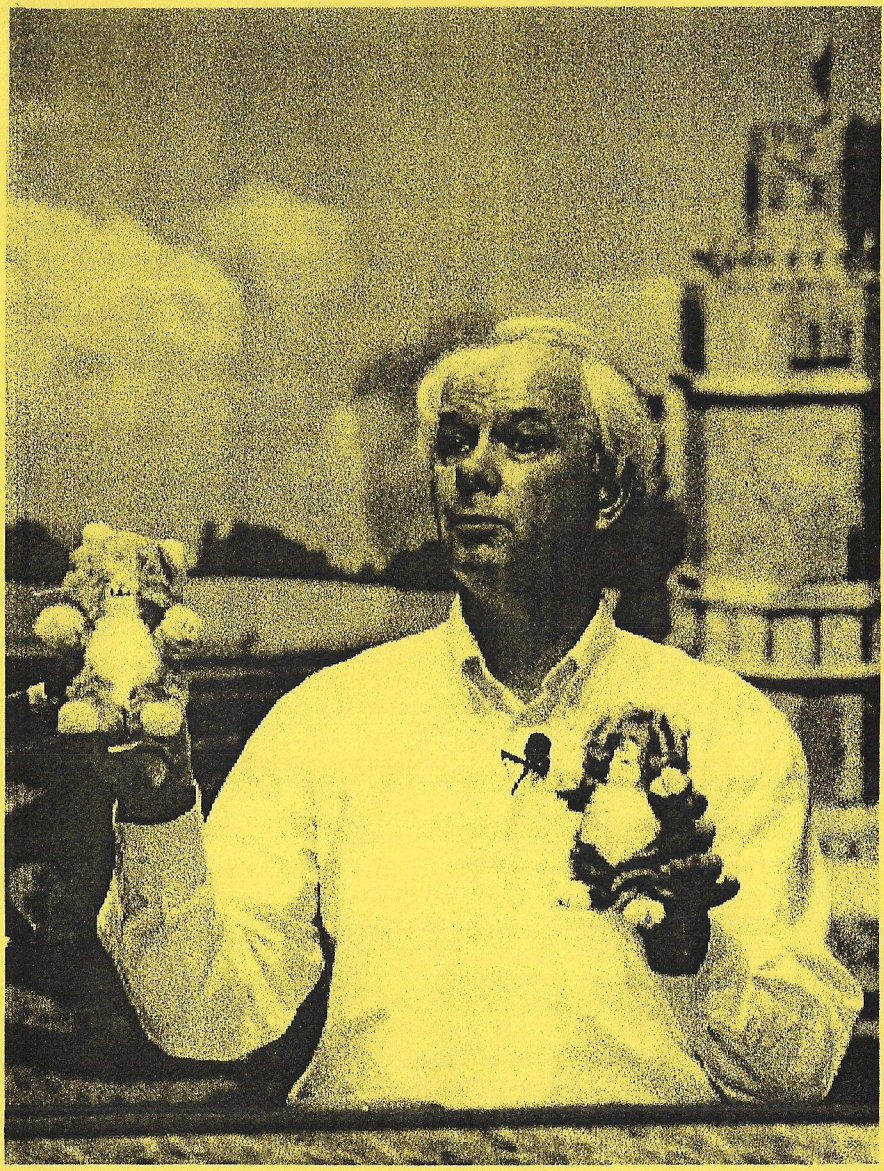
NOVACON 29



Progress Report #2

NOVACON 29

Date: 5th-7th November 1999.

Venue: The Britannia Hotel, New Street, Birmingham.

Guest of Honour: Ian Stewart.

Membership & Enquiries: Attending membership costs £28.00, then £32.00 from 11th April 1999 and £35.00 on the door. Postal registrations should be received by 30th October 1999, after this time please join on the door. Supporting membership costs £15.00 throughout. Cheques/Postal Orders should be made payable to "Novacon 29" and sent with your completed form(s) to: Carol Morton, 14 Park Street, Lye, Stourbridge, West Midlands, DY9 8SS.

Room Rates: £37.50 per person per night for people sharing twin/double rooms and £42.50 pppn for single rooms (inclusive of full English breakfast). NB: Hotel booking forms, and deposits of £20.00 per person, must be received by Carol Morton no later than 16th October 1999. Cheques for room deposits should be made payable to "The Britannia Hotel". Enquires regarding hotel bookings should be sent to Carol at the address above or you can call her on 01384 825386 (before 9pm).

Advertising Rates: Advertising is welcome for both the next two Progress Reports and for the Programme Book. The rates are as follows (fan rates in brackets): Progress Reports - Professional £25.00 (£13.00) full page, £14.50 (£8.00) half page, £8.50 (£5.00) quarter page. Programme Book - Professional £60.00 (£31.00) full page, £32.00 (£15.50) half page, £18.00 (£9.50) quarter page. Anyone interested in advertising should contact Martin Tudor at 24 Ravensbourne Grove, (off Clarkes Lane,) Willenhall, West Midlands, WV13 1HX (e-mail address empties@breathemail.net). Deadlines for camera-ready advertising copy are detailed below.

Deadlines: Progress Report #3: 17th July 1999, to be mailed late August 1999. Progress Report #4: 4th September 1999, to be mailed mid October 1999. Programme Book: 18th September 1999, distributed at Novacon 29.

Book Room Rates: Tables will cost £15.00 each for the whole weekend. To book a table (or tables) you must be a member of the convention.

Committee: Carol Morton (Chair & Hotel Liaison) and Tony Morton (Treasurer), 14 Park Street, Lye, Stourbridge, West Midlands, DY9 8SS, (tel: 01384-825386 - before 9pm, e-mail MORTON@CABLENET.CO.UK); Maureen Kincaid Speller (Programme), 60 Bournemouth Road, Folkestone, Kent, CT19 5AZ, England, e-mail novacon@acnestis.demon.co.uk; Steve Lawson, 379 Myrtle Road, Sheffield, S2 3HQ (tel: 0114 281 1572, e-mail dream@netcomuk.co.uk); Pat McMurray (Hotel Liaison), 28 Plaistow Grove, Bromley, Kent, BR1 3PB e-mail pat@cooky.demon.co.uk); Chris Murphy (Operations), 126 McKean Road, Oldbury, B69 4BA, (e-mail CSHM@compuserve.com); Martin Tudor (Publications), 24 Ravensbourne Grove, (off Clarkes Lane,) Willenhall, West Midlands, WV13 1HX (please note new e-mail address empties@breathemail.net).

Acknowledgements: Tony Berry, Carol Morton and Chris Murphy for their articles and Ian Stewart for his biographical information and drabble. All uncredited contributions have been written by Martin Tudor. This Progress Report was printed on the CRITICAL WAVE photocopier, contact Martin Tudor at the above address for details of WAVE's competitive prices.

Chair's Piece by Carol Morton

I was hoping to be able to tell you all in this piece that all way going swimmingly and we had no problems. Ha!!

I had written to the hotel in early January, requesting a meeting between themselves, Pat McMurray and myself so that we could begin negotiations for this year's Novacon. I had no answer.

I wrote again mid February, again got no reply - by which time I was worried.

So I phoned the hotel only to be told that the people I had built up a very good working relationship with during the negotiations for Novacon 28, had both left the company after being head hunted by the New Chamberlain Hotel. No wonder my letters went unanswered.

I finally managed to speak to the person who had been delegated to the Novacon 29 "account", a very pleasant lady called Jo who said she was quite willing to meet with us to begin negotiations, but there was a problem. "What problem?" says I. "All of the hotel rooms for that weekend are booked up, we will not be able to fit in any of your members", she announced.

"WHAT?"

Talk about panic. "But, but, we had the whole hotel booked, we were guaranteed the whole hotel, all rooms were to be held until 16th October" I think I aged a good few decades in that next five minutes when she went off to check what was going on.

She rang back and told me that it seems that all the rooms were booked, but booked to us. I never want to go through another five minutes like that again.

As we went to press, we still need to meet with the hotel, we do have all the rooms, we have all the function space but we do have to "break in" a completely new set of middle management, which in effect means starting all over again!

Oh joy!!

Hopefully by PR3 I will be recovered from that shock and be able to tell you that negotiations are proceeding well.

See you at Novacon if not before.

-- Carol Morton,
Chair, Novacon 29.

P.S: I am also looking after hotel bookings - see above, just send in your forms and I will pass them on to the hotel, I'm sure I can get you in!

Guest of Honour: Ian Stewart.

Ian Stewart was born in 1945, educated at Cambridge (BA in Mathematics) and Warwick (PhD) and is now a Professor of Mathematics at Warwick University. He is also Director of the Mathematics Awareness Centre at Warwick (MAC@W) and has held visiting positions in Germany, New Zealand, and the USA.

A member of the Birmingham SF Group, and a popular speaker at sf conventions for some years, Ian is best known for his popular science writing on mathematical themes. In 1995 he was awarded the Royal Society's Michael Faraday Medal for furthering the public understanding of science and his book NATURE'S NUMBERS was shortlisted for the 1996 Rhone-Poulenc Prize for Science Books. He delivered the 1997 Royal Institution Christmas Lectures, televised by the BBC in the UK and NHK in Japan.

Ian has had over 60 books published including FROM HERE TO INFINITY, NATURE'S NUMBERS; THE COLLAPSE OF CHAOS; FEARFUL SYMMETRY; DOES GOD PLAY DICE? (which has sold around150,000 copies in English and has been translated into 13 other languages); THE PROBLEMS OF MATHEMATICS; GAME, SET & MATH; ANOTHER FINE MATH YOU'VE GOT ME INTO... Earlier books include three mathematical comic books published in French: OH! CATASTROPHE!, LES FRACTALS and AH! LES BEAUX GROUPES. His most recent books are FIGMENTS OF REALITY, THE MAGICAL MAZE, and LIFE'S OTHER SECRET.

He contributes to a wide range of newspapers and magazines in the UK, Europe, and the USA, including SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN and DISCOVER,

and is the mathematics consultant for NEW SCIENTIST. He has also been a consultant for ENCYCLOPAEDIA BRITANNICA and writes the monthly 'Mathematical Recreations' column of SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN.

Ian scripted and presented the December 1992 BBC radio programme CHAOS! and has appeared in a regular puzzle slot on the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation's QUIRKS AND QUARKS. He has appeared on British tv in the EQUINOX programmes 'Chaos', 'Antichaos', and 'Great Little Numbers', THE LATE SHOW, an ANTENNA programme on the 'two cultures', REALITY ON THE ROCKS, ESTHER, THE BRIDE OF FRANKENSTEIN, SEX AND THE SCIENTISTS, THE COLOURS OF INFINITY, THE NUMBERS GAME, COUNTRY TRACKS, and once on BLUE PETER.

An active research mathematician with over 120 published papers, and his present field is the effects of symmetry on dynamics, with applications to pattern formation and chaos theory in areas including animal locomotion, fluid dynamics, mathematical biology, chemical reactions, electronic circuits, quality control of wire, and intelligent control of spring coiling machines. He takes a particular interest in problems that lie in the gaps between pure and applied mathematics and has written several research texts including SINGULARITIES AND GROUPS IN BIFURCATION THEORY (with Martin Golubitsky and David Schaeffer) and CATASTROPHE THEORY AND ITS APPLICATIONS (with Tim Poston).

His hobbies are reading, writing, keeping fish, painting, and messing about on a guitar and is a member of: Birmingham Science Fiction Group, Science fiction and Fantasy Writers of America, London Mathematical Society, American Mathematical Society, Cambridge Philosophical Society, American Association for the Advancement of Science, Mathematical Association of America, International Society for the Interdisciplinary Study of Symmetry, Institute of Mathematics and its Applications, American Museum of Natural History, International String Figure Association, Gresham Society.

An active member of SFWA for about 15 years Ian has published 19 sf short stories in ANALOG, INTERZONE, and OMNI since 1979: **...And master of one**, ANALOG 99 #6, June 1979; **The malodorous plutocrats**, ANALOG 99 #9, September 1979; **Message from Earth**, OMNI, February 1980 (reprinted in THE BEST OF OMNI SCIENCE FICTION #3, 1982); **Paradise misplaced**, ANALOG 101 #3, March 1981; **Incredibility gap**, ANALOG 101 #4, March 1981; **The microbotic revolution**, OMNI, 3 #11,

August 1981 (reprinted in THE BEST OF OMNI SCIENCE FICTION #6, 1983); **Deep Joat**, ANALOG 101 #8, July 1981; **Ashes**, OMNI 4 #3, December 1981; **The digital dictator**, Analog 102 #8, August 1982; **The treacle well**, ANALOG 103 #10, mid-September 1983; **Missing link**, ANALOG 106 #1, January 1986; **Billy the Kid**, ANALOG 107 #1, January 1987; **Displaced person**, ANALOG 107 #5, May 1987; **Captives of the slavestone**, ANALOG 107 #12, mid-December 1987; **Curlew's choice**, ANALOG 110 #3, February 1990; **Wall of death**, ANALOG 110 #11, October 1990; **Hydra**, ANALOG 113 #3, February 1993; **The ape that ate the universe**, ANALOG 113 #8/9, July 1993; **Code of the skydiver**, (with Jack Cohen), INTERZONE 136, October 1996.

Currently Ian is working with Jack Cohen on an sf novel entitled WHEELERS and has just completed **SCIENCE OF DISCWORLD**, with Jack Cohen & Terry Pratchett, which will be published in June 1999 by Random House.

Programme by Maureen Kincaid Speller

There was a moment during Novacon 28 when I finally focused on the first PR for Novacon 29, and more pertinently, on the item on programming, and then on the precise whereabouts of Martin Tudor. With an introduction like that, I'm not sure there's anything left to say, except 'bring me the head of Martin Tudor ...' but I don't suppose Helena would let me have it (and anyway, Dave Hicks still owes me Paul Kincaid's head on a stick). So, let me reassure you that while I had a fine time in Baltimore, I won't be bringing you a pocket Worldcon ... I mean, could you imagine Nic Farey let loose with a diamond screen? Exactly, and neither can I, so let's not even think about it.

There's always a temptation, when asked to write about programming, to say 'oh, we're going to do this, and this, and this', but that's a temptation I'm trying to avoid, not least because I don't want to make rash promises and then disappoint people if plans don't work out. And yes, it's also partly because, at this stage, I have only the haziest notion of exactly what we're going to do. This is as it should be, given that a very important part of programme planning is the gathering of ideas and possibilities, making connections and so on, but this much I can say. One of the great strengths of Novacon is its comparatively small size and very particular fannish atmosphere; it's a convention where people expect to spend a lot of time catching up with friends, talking in the bar 'til all hours and then starting all

over again the next day. At the same time, it's a convention where a strong well-focused programme can seize the collective imagination, get people talking about what's going on - last year's TAFF debate was a case in point - and inspire them to take a closer look at what they might ordinarily take for granted.

I was very impressed with the work Pat McMurray did with last year's Novacon programme, and I'll be following pretty much the same framework this year, with alterations where Pat and I felt things didn't work as well as they might have. Feedback from those of you who attended last year's convention would be very welcome too - just send it to me. I hope, with the help of Pat and one or two other people, to put together a convention programme that will entertain you, enthral you, maybe even grab you by the scruff of the neck and say 'hey, have you ever really thought about *this*, but most of all, leave you reeling, with a mind full of ideas, wanting to grab total strangers and tell them about the great weekend you've just had.

Ian Stewart is just the man to be Guest of Honour at a convention like that, the man whose Royal Institution Christmas Lectures made an O-level maths failure feel she actually understood the Fibonacci Sequence, and made her look at the world in a whole new way. If we can impart some of that same excitement I and many others felt when we watched those lectures, then we'll have done a good job.

And damn, it looks like I've done just what I said I wouldn't. I can resist anything except temptation.

[Maureen can be contacted 60 Bournemouth Road, Folkestone, Kent, CT19 5AZ, England or via novacon@acnestis.demon.co.uk]

Operations

As we are sure most of you are aware Novacon, like most conventions in Britain, is run by volunteers and we can't have too many of them! So if you are willing to help out at the convention - anything from moving chairs to helping with tech ops or working on the programme, please contact our Ops Manager, Chris Murphy, at 126 McKean Road, Oldbury, B69 4BA, (e-mail CSHM@compuserve.com).

Hotel Bookings by Carol Morton

The hotel's room rates are £42.50 per person per night in a single room and £37.50 per person per night in a twin or double, both inclusive of full English breakfast. The enclosed hotel booking form explains all this. We also require from you a £20 per person deposit for your rooms. So please enclose a cheque made payable to "The Britannia Hotel". The balance of your room costs will have to be paid on arrival at the hotel, for those of you who attended Novacon 28 or have been to the Adelphi in Liverpool for an Eastercon this will not come as much of a surprise as it is standard policy at Britannia Hotels.

The 1998 Nova Awards

The 1998 Nova Awards were presented at Novacon 28 in the Britannia Hotel in Birmingham on the 15th November 1998. The full breakdown appears below, the figure in parenthesis indicates the points scored under the voting system:

Best Fanartist

1. **Don West (76)**
2. Sue Mason (65)
3. Dave Hicks (60)
4. Steve Jeffery/Esjay (49)
5. Dave Mooring (37)
6. Jim Barker (22)
7. Ken Cheslin (8)

8= Atom (1)
Bridget Bradshaw (1)
Steve Green (1)
SMS (1)

Best Fanwriter

1. **Maureen Kincaid Speller (60)**
2. Claire Brialey (47)
3. Mark Plummer (36)
4. Christina Lake (31)
5. Martin Tudor (25)
6. Mark McCann (24)

7= Mike Abbott (19)
Yvonne Rowse (19)
9. Paul Kincaid (14)
10= Michael Ashley (12)
Debbi Kerr (12)
12. Dave Langford (11)
13. Alison Freebairn (9)
14. Judith Hanna (8)
15. Simon Ounsley (7)
16= Bridget Bradshaw (6)
Lilian Edwards (6)
Ian Sorensen (6)
Dr Plokta (6)
20. Mike Scott (5)
21= Ann Green (3)
Steve Jeffery (3)
23. John Berry (2)
24= Elizabeth Billinger (1)
Tanya Brown (1)
Steve Davies (1)
Sue Jones (1)
Alison Scott (1)

Best Fanzine

1. **BANANA WINGS (80)**
2. PLOKTA (46)
3. GOTTERDAMMERUNG (39)
4. BARMAID (30)
5= ATTITUDE (24)
SNUFKINS BUM (24)
7. SALIROMANIA (19)
8. INTERNATIONAL REVOLUTIONARY GARDENER (17)
9. DID I SAY THAT OUT LOUD? (16)
10. BOB (15)
11= SNUFKIN GOES WEST... (13)
TAFFLON TUDOR (13)
13. BUMPER SNUFKIN (11)
14. ANSIBLE (9)
15. THE WRONG LEGGINGS (4)
16= POGONOPHOBIA (3)
STANDING IN THE SHADOWS (3)
18. OLAF (2)

19= BALLOONS OVER BRISTOL (1)
BLIP (1)
BW: A PAIR OF WOMBATS (1)
DRUNKEN FUCKWIT (1)
FABLES OF IRISH FANDOM (1)
NEVER QUITE ARRIVING (1)
SQUIGGLEDY HOY (1)
THE UBIQUITOUS THEY (1)
THUNDERBOX (1)

The Nova Awards by Tony Berry

The Nova Awards are presented annually at Novacon for work in fanzines. For a piece to qualify for this year's awards, it must be published between 1st October 1998 and 30th September 1999.

Fanzines which I've received so far this year are:
ANSIBLE #136-139. Dave Langford, 94 London Road, Reading, Berkshire, RG1 5AU.
BANANA WINGS #12. Claire Brialey, 26 Northampton Road, Croydon, Surrey, CR0 7HA and Mark Plummer, 14 Northway Road, Croydon, CR0 6JE.
BARMAID #2-5. Yvonne Rowse, Evergreen, Halls Farm Lane, Trimpley, Worcestershire, DY12 1NP.
BOB #15. Ian Sorensen, 7 Woodside Walk, Hamilton, ML3 7HY.
DID I SAY THAT OUT LOUD? #3. Debbi Kerr, 38 Bankfield Terrace, Burley, Leeds, LS4 2RE.
INTERNATIONAL REVOLUTIONARY GARDENER #2. Judith Hanna & Joseph Nicholas, 15 Jansons Road, South Tottenham, London, N15 4JU.
FABLES OF IRISH FANDOM Vol. 2-3. John Berry, 4 Chilterns, South Hatfield, Hertfordshire, AL10 8JU and Ken Cheslin, 29 Kestrel Road, Halesowen, West Midlands, B63 2PH.
KERLES #2. Tommy Ferguson, 40 Deramore Avenue, Belfast, BT7 3ER.
MIRA #2. Michael Abbott, 102 William Smith Close, Cambridge, CB1 3QF.

All of the above fanzines are available for "The Usual", which means in exchange for other fanzines, contributions, or in response to letters of

comment. In the first instance a polite letter of request accompanied by postage or a large stamped, self-addressed envelope, works fine.

[If you have any enquiries about the Novas or you want a copy of the Rules (50p to cover copying and postage), contact Tony Berry at 55 Seymour Road, Oldbury, West Midlands, B69 4EP.]

Novacon's RNIB Raffle

As usual we will be selling raffle tickets to raise money for the Royal National Institute for the Blind's "Talking Books for the Blind Project". Last year the raffle raised just over £360 (which we rounded-up to £400), but this year we would like to make that £500.

So, if you have anything you would like to donate as a prize for the raffle please contact Martin Tudor, 24 Ravensbourne Grove, Willenhall, WV13 1HX (e-mail empties@breathemail.net).

Child Minding

At the last few Novacons Richard Standage and Helena Bowles have offered an informal child minding service at the convention. However, because this facility has not been used for the last couple of years we are not able to offer it this year. As ever, feedback is invited to Carol Morton, Novacon 29 Chair, 14 Park Street, Lye, Stourbridge, West Midlands, DY9 8SS or via e-mail MORTON@CABLENET.CO.UK.

Delpinian Drabble by Ian Stewart

Greetings from your qubit communicator pal on Delta Delphini. Gratitude for the 'drabble' concept described so excruciatingly in your recent transmission. It has caught on in a big way, and is now a close rival to ritual rancidity abuse in popularity, especially among the young. Even recidivist hermaphrohives are queuing to have their squamous lamellae drabbled in bioluminescent tattoos. Popular themes are 'Slow death to the imperialist running dogs of Terra' and 'What we did on our lethargy binge'. The only problem is that since we do not understand discrete digital arithmetic we always lose count and run out of

Novacon 29 Members: 29 March 1999

1 Ian Stewart
2 Carol Morton
3 Tony Morton
4 Martin Tudor
5 Maureen Speller
6 Chris Murphy
7 Pat McMurray
8 Steve Lawson
9 Sherrie Powell
10 Avril Stewart
11 Ina Shorrock
12 Norman Shorrock
13 Wendy Graham
15 Julian Headlong
16 Caroline Bott
17 Mark Huntley James
18 Tommy Ferguson
19 Janet Wilkins
20 Bob Shaw
21 Mike Scott
22 Gwen Funnell
23 Chris O'Shea
24 Paul Oldroyd
25 Chris Donaldson
26 Peter Wareham
27 Chris Bell
28 Arthur Cruttenden
29 Roger Robinson
30 Pat Brown
31 Vernon Brown
32 Mark Bailey
33 Dave Cox
34 Nadja Tegen
35 Colin Harris
36 Yvonne Rowse
37 David Thomas
38 Claire Brialey
39 Julia Daly
40 Sue Harrison
41 Peter Mabey
42 Elaine Coates
43 Mark Slater
44 Simon Dearn
45 Chris Stocks
46 Simon Bradshaw
47 Bridget Bradshaw
48 Sue Francis
49 Paul Kincaid
50 Henry Newton
51 Cherry Newton
52 Anne Woodford
53 Alan Woodford
54 Sue Oliver
55 Simon Hovell
56 Lisanne Norman
57 Steve Jones
58 Steve Davies
59 Giulia DeCesare
60 Sue Jones
61 Mick Evans
62 Bernie Evans
63 Nick Mills
64 Neil Tomkinson
65 Alison Tomkinson
66 Krystyna Oborn
67 Liam Proven
68 Tanya Brown
69 Noel Collyer
70 Laura Wheatly
71 Alice Lawson
72 Roger Burton West
73 Tony Rogers
74 Niall Gordon
75 Tony Keen
76 Doreen Rogers
77 Niall Jackson
78 Dave French
79 Shirley French
80 Pauline Morgan
81 Chris Morgan
82 Alison Scott
83 Steven Cain
84 Paul Dormer
85 Nic Farey
86 Al Johnston
87 John Rowbottom
88 Anne Wilson
89 Michael Abbott
90 Mark Plummer
91 Diana Wynne Jones
92 Andrew Adams
93 John D Rickett
94 Steve Mowbray
95 Eira Latham
96 Caroline Mullan
97 Brian Ameringen
98 Martin Smith
99 Steve Green
100 Ann Green
101 Dave Hardy
102 John Harold
103 Robbie Bourget
104 George Ternent
105 Linda Ternent
106 Chris Cheyne
107 Susie Cheyne
108 Ian Sorensen
109 Dave Langford
110 Rog Peyton
111 Margaret Austin
112 Martin Easterbrook
113 Lesley Swan
114 Erhard Leder
115 Adrian Snowdon
116 Mike Ford
117 Stuart Capewell
118 William McCabe
119 Gerry Webb
120 Mali Perera
121 Peter Weston
122 Eileen Weston
123 Amanda Baker
124 David Clements
125 Gordon Brignal
126 Roger Earnshaw
127 Tim Stannard
128 Dave Tompkins
129 Shiela Pover